

CONDITION OF WINES

PURPOSE: To provide information on how to identify wine that is not servable to the customer.

SCOPE: Ensure all employees serving wine can identify bad wine before they serve the customer. This guide shows the different ways to identify bad wine.

GENERAL: Providing quality service and products to club customers are keys to success. In order to provide quality service and products, employees need to be trained on all aspects of job performance. Knowing how to sell and serve wine can increase the guest check average and also lead to an enjoyable dining experience for the customer. When serving wine it is important to make sure that this very fragile product is still in good condition. A bad bottle or glass of wine can spoil the entire meal.

GUIDANCE:

Make every effort to ensure the wines sold are stable and trouble-free. It is inevitable that a faulty bottle will crop up from time to time. The following is helpful both before the wine is served and if the wine is returned by a customer. Remember most red table wines throw a natural sediment after a few years in the bottle. This should be allowed to settle before drinking and, if necessary, the wine should be decanted.

CORKINESS

Symptoms:	An unpleasant smell of cork and fungus, and a similar taste in the wine.
Cause:	A diseased cork.
Remedy	Exchange the wine.

CLOUDINESS

Symptoms:	A cloudy haze in the wine, which will not settle quickly.
Cause:	Fermentation in the wine, excess protein, metal contamination, or bacterial action.
Remedy	Exchange the wine.

CRYSTALLINE DEPOSITS

Symptoms:	Delicate flakes or crystals, which are visible when the bottle is inverted, but which quickly settle on standing.
Cause:	Excess tartar (tartaric acid), precipitated by low temperatures.
Remedy	If the deposit is very heavy, and would lead to wastage of a glass of wine, exchange the wine. If the deposit is very light, advise the customer to let the bottle settle before pouring. Tartrate crystals do not affect the taste, and are often present in the best white wines, especially German wines.

FERMENTATION

Symptoms:	Blown corks or "weeping" at the capsule. Cloudiness. A bad smell and bubbles in the wine.
Cause:	Yeast in the bottle or malolactic fermentation.
Remedy	Exchange the wine. Be sure you do not confuse this condition with the slight sparkle on the tongue that is found in some Moselles, Chiantis, and other Italian reds, and in Mateus Rose and Lancer's Rose.

OXIDATION

Symptoms:	A distinctive unpleasant smell and, in white wines, a darkening of color.
Cause:	Exposure of the wine to air before or after bottling (from a loose cork).
Remedy	Exchange the wine. Ensure bottles of wine are stored on their side to prevent the cork from drying out

VINEGARY TASTE

Symptoms:	A strong pungent smell of sulfur.
Cause:	Very recent bottling or an overdose of sulfur, a traditional preservative added to all wine in the bottling process
Remedy	Exchange the wine. If not too strong, leave the bottle open an hour or two so the smell will disappear, then use for cooking or sampling. Sulfur is harmless.

WEEPING

Symptoms:	A slight leakage of wine from the capsule, leading to loss of wine in the bottle.
Cause:	A loose cork or fermentation.
Remedy	Don't serve the wine by the bottle to a customer, test it for stability, and if good, serve it by the glass to a customer ordering the same type wine

SUMMARY:

Before serving wine to the customer, check it for cockiness, cloudiness, fermentation, oxidation, weeping, excess sulfur, and vinegary smell. Taking the time to do this, ensures the customer

receives a quality product and can make a difference in how your service is perceived.

Experiencing a bad bottle or glass of wine is a real turn-off. Ensure the service staff receives the proper training so customer complaints can be headed off. Remember, it is almost impossible to get a customer to return after a bad experience.